



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0490GA-1 for Morgan County Charter School System

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well defined vision statement in alignment with the mission of school district including: the creation of personalized learning driven by technology, historical data to support prior dedication to the mission related to personal learning through community and parental involvement, external resources, and quality of staff. Clear distinctive student achievement goals Comprehensive explanation of district's vision of personal student learning The applicant states a desire to provide devices for all students to allow internet access and learning resources. The proposal states the utilization of social networking to motivate learners to promote learning potential twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week to sustain life long learning. Clear reference of research based strategies to support student achievement The applicant sets forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision by including strategies to improve student achievement through personal learning communities that encompasses all students. Improvements related to technological infrastructure to provide access for all stakeholders twenty-four hours per day and providing devices for all students and teachers supports the vision and alignment of the district. Extensive professional development opportunities to support turn key training and enhance a clear record of success related to student achievement. The information provided builds on the core educational assurances through ambitious standards and performance measures to prepare students for success. 		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools in the Morgan County Charter School System, students, staff and leaders will participate in the grant activities. The rationale for selection is based on a collaborative desire to enhance systematic and systemic reform in rural school district with a goal of vertical alignment. All participating schools indicated and demographic information for each school is provided. Total number of students participating noted Systemic reform noted to promote vertical alignment in a rural setting. One hundred percent staff participation expected to promote climate of change Full student participation (Pre K-12) is likely to promote high quality implementation of the proposed plan. 		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear graphic representation of indicated outcome goals is provided. The applicant provides limited indicators of progress toward goal. Percentage indicators overtime would clarify expected timeline of progress. An unclear timeline of outcome completion is present in the application. Short, medium, and long term outcome indicators without dates to define the timeline. Logic model supports the design in terms of progress indicators based on need Measurable outcomes not specifically indicated. Numeric indicators of success would clarify achievement outcomes. All schools and all students will participate in the high quality plan which supports the criterion. Expected outcomes, 		

achievable goals, and the designation of personnel to carry out specific responsibilities are supporting factors in the likely success of the implementation of the plan to promote district wide change.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant provides a clear description of assessment criterion. The applicant expects to exceed state standards and noted the utilized assessment tool (CRCT). • Achievable goal percentages noted utilizing standardized assessment results and clear evidence indicated on the provided graph. Differentiation of growth is noted to reflect concentrated efforts of the plan to provide personalize learning environments to the at-risk population. • Achievement gap data indicated and clear evidence is noted on the provided graph. • Ambitious graduation rate progress noted and clear evidence is indicated on the graph. • College enrollment subgroup data was not included. • Data indicates subgroups reaching one hundred percent graduation rate one year after grant completion. • Overall achievable growth rates display a consistent increase throughout the length of the plan. Post-grant achievement rates display continued projected growth. • The target information provided supports the likelihood of improved student performance and learning by addressing achievable goals for all participating students. The targets build on previously noted proficiency rates on the Georgia Criterion Reference Competency Test 		

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant demonstrates a mostly positive record of success supported through five year trend data. Historical data collection began with a 1995 Strategic Plan. • The applicant noted a focused strategic plan noted. Feedback was provided by three hundred fifty stakeholders and data monitoring related to the plan began in 2009. • Multiple data sources, including trends on the CRCT, End of Course Test, and the Georgia High School Graduation Test, are referenced to support success. Core subject area progress indicators were met. • The enhanced Georgia High School Graduation Test used for measuring AYP for all students in the previous four years showed increases in English/Language Arts (87.7% in 2008 to 90% in 2012). Math scores in the 'meets/exceeds expectations' range decreased slightly (by .7%) from 78.5% in 2008 to 77.9% in 2012. In 2009, the graduation rate was 87.3% and in 2012 the graduation rate declined to 86.4%. • Data provided related to closing the achievement gap was positive in most subgroups. Developed and implemented scheduling changes with flexibility to meet individual needs including tutoring programs and ESY programming proved effective. • Effective use of community and school resources to report performance data is noted. The achievement of progress is addressed at monthly Board meetings, Council meetings, Parent-Teacher Advisory Council, and through local media updates, and website updates. • The district reports no low performing schools. • The applicant demonstrates a strong record of success through the evidence of data beginning in 1995. Although a slight decline in mathematics was noted, data was provided for all of the required categories and a majority showed noted improvement 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of multiple scheduled committee meetings that is supported with meeting documentation suggests evidence of transparency in the development and implementation of the plan. • Personnel salary information is not provided in the application. However, the applicant does refer to the school governance councils in each of the four participating schools, composed of teachers, parents, students, and community members. The School Governance Council assists the schools in determining necessary staff member units, professional learning activities, technological needs, building repair issues and instructional material requests. The School Governance Council is subject to the Open and Public Meets Act and is required to maintain its adopted policies, budgets, meeting agendas and minutes and will make documents available for public inspection. • Non-personnel expenditures are not included in the application • Noted compliance with state statutes and terms of Charter School contract including school governance council to support transparency related to process and procedure • Evidence provided in the application of measures taken to address transparency. Schools in the charter school system are governed by Governance Councils made up of stakeholders including parents, teachers, and community members. 		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder participation is evident. System Charter Leadership Team responsibilities are detailed in the proposal and participation and responsibilities of teachers, parents, and community members who serve on each school's governance council is noted. • The applicant provides evidence to support established strategic plan development. Information provided supports autonomy through scheduling flexibility, extended learning time, student learning communities, and PLC's. • Definition and compliance indicators for state Charter Schools is noted. Charter schools have flexibility from some state and local rules in exchange for a higher degree of accountability for raising achievement. Charter systems operate under the terms of the charter between the State Board of Education and the local school district. • School government councils including parents, teachers, and community members are granted decision-making authority related to summative evaluations of teachers, the hiring process, budget recommendations promoting autonomy while maintaining Charter School compliance. • The information provided in the application demonstrates autonomy by having school a governance council at each school and a leadership team to monitor the progress of each individual council. As a recognized charter system by the state of Georgia, the applicant demonstrates evidence of its accountability standards related to legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements and can implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal. 		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant provided evidence of defined participation of stakeholders through the Principals Teacher Advisory Council, community members, and community resources. • Evidence of logic framework progression evolving to a workable model. Initially internally devised leading to progressive involvement of all stakeholders is clear. • Collective bargaining status is undefined. Seventy percent teacher buy-in supports the non-collective bargaining requirement. • Appropriate support documentation from stakeholders is included. Seventy percent teacher buy-in is documented, student involvement in planning is noted, and letters of support are provided. • Direct engagement of students and staff in the initial stages of development of the plan is lacking. • Substantial increased involvement of stakeholders as the planning evolved, including senior leadership staff, Governance Councils, and local and state leaders, demonstrates evidence of meaningful engagement of stakeholders in the development of the proposal. • The applicant gained support from the Chamber of Commerce, Partners in Education, the NAACP, and the Boys and Girls Clubs. Representatives from local civic groups include the Lion's Club, Rotary Club, and Kiwanis. 		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant included data collected from stakeholder groups including students, parents, and community members to define and address strengths and weaknesses that were identified through strategic plan development. Teachers were 		

notably not included in the data collection stakeholder group. The current status of progress in the development of personalized learning was examined and analyzed. Targets extending through the grant period were designated through the analysis of this existing data.

- Complete documentation of high quality plan development is present. The evidence includes: key goals directly related to the vision of the system, specific activities such as using state approved assessment tools and focused stakeholder involvement, and reasonable timelines to address the span of the project and beyond support the rationale for implementation.
- Clear rationale related to district's internal needs assessment data is provided. Action Team roles in the examination of strategic goals to address needs and monitoring of progress is clear.
- Utilizing existing data, the applicant established a high quality plan based on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). The influence of multiple stakeholders, including the school board, central office, parents, students, and community representation guided the evolution of the proposal in the development of beliefs, mission, and vision for the district. A weakness in the logic of the reform proposal is the absence of teacher involvement.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key elements including specific learning goals as defined in the plan are supported by the strategic plan and needs assessment data. Personalized learning system focuses on addressing learning styles and the needs of individual students. • Each student and teacher to be equipped with a technological device to create an in depth learning management system. • The applicant provided documented evidence of a planned student progress management system. The management system is available for all stakeholders to manage and track progress. • Clear description of individual learning goals to meet graduation and college and career readiness standards and expectations is provided by the applicant. Evidence of data collection procedures to determine baseline data for all students to drive individual learning and support self regulated progress to enhance achievement is provided. The applicant provided a means in providing updated learning data to monitor progress toward goal achievement. • The applicant provided a detailed outline of planned implementation for the grant period. Internal parties responsible for monitoring the plan will receive appropriate professional development and training which will be developed in a turn key format. • Ambitious long range plan with a timeline for implementation includes planning beyond grant period. • Although the applicant states that all students will benefit from this project, evidence to support access and exposure to diverse cultures to motivate and deepen individual learning is not addressed. • Evidence of user friendly LMS where students, teachers, and parents can access data and incorporate software and teacher designed activities and assessments to support personalized learning is provided. This enables all students to achieve success related to individualized learning goals and graduate college and career ready. • Although the applicant strongly addresses the mastery of critical academic content, student development of traits such as teamwork, creativity, and communication are not addressed. • Training and support will be offered to all teachers and all students related to LMS throughout the length of the project. Personalized Coaches will be replaced by Teacher Peer Coaches to extend training after the completion of the grant period. • The applicant has developed a comprehensive plan to implement personalized learning for all students grades Kindergarten through twelfth grade with the support of parents, educators, and students. The proposal allows for students to manage and understand their personal learning plan and monitor their progress. Parents will have the opportunity to monitor student progress and will be offered training and support. The evidence provided supports the creation of a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching to provide all students the supports needed to graduate college and career ready. 		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused professional development opportunities for staff supported by Professional Learning Coaches 		

- The applicant provided a detailed timeline for implementation. Pilot integration Year 1 selection process based on previous success of teaching practices and technology infusion.
- The applicant provided evidence of full staff participation.
- Measurable progress goals related to the number of teachers participating in the project throughout the length of the project are indicated by the applicant.
- The applicant provides an Inadequate description of an actual or proposed teacher/leadership evaluation system. The selection process of a research based evaluative tool and its significance related to the percentage of students receiving instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and the quality of leadership is unclear.
- The applicant presents information to support the implementation of personal learning environments through a sequential effective plan involving pre-assessment surveys, analyzing existing data, and collaboration of the administration, teachers, and the community. A detailed timeline of activities with achievable goals is defined using a logic model developed by Leadership Teams.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant provided evidence of strong internal communication standards. For example, Senior Leadership Teams and Administrative Teams meet frequently with individual school representatives, weekly Board of Education updates are provided, and Principals' Council meet regularly to monitor progress and conduct needs assessments. • The applicant provided evidence of school level decision-making strategies with district support. Collegiality is evident through an extensive collaborative effort and autonomy based on individual needs of schools is noted. • Innovative means of mastery indicators are clear. Flexibility provided in the attainment of student mastery and evidence based on supplemental programming such as extended school year, remediation groups, tutoring programs and extended day format to promote mastery of subject matter is provided. Subgroups granted equal access to all programs and high school students have the opportunity to earn credit for classes based on mastery of standards. • Learning styles of students and student preferences are integrated into personalized learning plans to assist in improving student achievement. Programs such as small remediation groups, credit recovery, and replacing seat time with mastery of standards indicators support instructional practices and learning resources that are adaptable and accessible for all students. School leadership teams at each school address and meet the needs within their particular school. The responsibilities of these teams is based in school improvement planning and implementation review. • All subgroup populations have equal access to all programs. Students with special needs, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged, are encouraged to participate in the above mentioned supplemental programs. • The applicant has presented a high quality plan to support project implementation with support from both internal and external stakeholders and collaborative efforts in school level decision making to support personalized learning for all students. 		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder access well defined. For example, access to necessary tools to support personalized learning is well supported, all participants regardless of income, will be provided with technological tools and training, parents and students receive training through the designed infrastructure to support personal learning communities and parents familiar with currently operating system for access to more specific information. • Although the applicant proposes to supply an internet ready laptop or I-Pad for each student to use during and outside of school, internet access could be hindered by the lack of internet connectability in the homes of students. • Comprehensive user training and technical support indicated through a Helpline system. Participants will be supported during and after the school day. Technology support personnel are indicated in the proposal. • Interoperable data system in place to promote the sharing of information such as course selection, attendance, and 		

discipline data to enhance the time spent on instructional improvement. Existing parent portals will be enhanced to interface with the LMS.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported details are provided regarding the scaffolding of previously implemented technology based programming and progress monitoring strategies will be used to assist in a continuous improvement process to assess progress in meeting goals. Effective use of timeline to describe evaluation reporting projection dates Focused attention to internal continuous improvement with alignment to common core standards and common assessment implementation Focused attention of continuous improvement supported through external partnership cooperative to monitor progress of personalized learning system to reflect the evaluation of outcome results related to short, medium, and long term goals A formalized continuous improvement cycle including measuring goals, using strategies and resources to conduct needs assessments, and setting and assessing benchmarks to monitor success support the applicant's desire to gain timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goal completion. The Superintendent will publicly share information on the quality of the investment at Townhall meetings and at local civic club meetings such as the Lion's Club, Rotary, and Kiwanis meetings. Information will also be posted on social networking sites and the system's website. The applicant has provided a credible strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement cycle that encompasses setting achievable goals, developing a plan including resources, strategies, and activities, an implementation timeline that includes both benchmarks and deliverables, a process for evaluation through monitoring, and a process for the analysis of data. 		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence present regarding platform for dissemination of information and gathering feedback information: engagement and communication efforts evidenced through administrative support meetings, Board of Education, faculty and PTO meetings, and community organizations Defined communication efforts directed to all stakeholders including community members and civic organization: evaluation and monitoring results posted on district websites and included on social media sites Evidence throughout the application supports the applicant's desire to continually improve and make necessary adjustments through on-going communication and collaboration of effort. On-going communication initiated by the Superintendent with Teachers' Advisory Council, Principals' Council, BOE, and System Charter Leadership Teams will filter down to the staff at each school, PTO, and community members. 		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant provided no evidence of a teacher and leadership evaluation system and/or standards currently used. The applicant has proposed the utilization of the state evaluation system (TKES) beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. A clear indication of the percentage of highly effective teachers and leaders is needed to assess the implementation of an effective plan. Quality chosen performance indicators aligned with college and career readiness standards Provided baseline data garnered through results of required state standardized assessment results Supporting factors, including attendance and the health of students, that significantly impact performance are encompassed and referenced, supports a multi-faceted approach to personalized learning and improved outcomes Overall ambitious and achievable performance measures with indicated targets in alignment with the Georgia Department of Education College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI). Data collection is on-going and presently occurring. Growth monitoring will evolve as new collection tool is implemented. 		

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence supports applicant's desire to address continued improvement through the use of on-going stakeholder participation and evaluation of results. Effectiveness will be measured both qualitatively and quantitatively based on stakeholders' experience and perceptions. Measures of effectiveness will include views from parents, students, teachers, and community stakeholders. • Stakeholder participation in the development, implementation, and continued evaluation of the plan clearly referenced throughout the application • The monitoring of the success of the plan and proposed activities includes formative feedback from parents and students, staff members, and members of the community. Flexibility within the plan allows for generated feedback to be infused to meet the goal of improved student achievement. • Multiple measures referenced throughout the proposal will encompass full evaluative efforts related to the success and effectiveness of RTTT-D funded activities. Close monitoring of performance indicators of all students and subgroups with flexibility with implementation strategies and timelines support the district's desire of evaluating the effectiveness of its proposed plan. 		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound budgetary explanation including expenditures related to professional development, selected management system, mobile devices and equipment and costs associated with student assessments • Clear distinction between long and short term expenditures: supports sustainability during the project period • External funding sources noted: NCLB and local revenue • Budgetary information, as reflected in the tables provided, is reasonable and sufficient to support the proposed activities. The information provided supports the applicant's priorities and vision as explained and detailed throughout the proposal. 		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability regarding internal training indicated and addressed through the proposed use of turn-key staff development • Referenced but undefined sustainability funds from federal, state, and local resources: maintenance and upgrades associated with a project built upon technology requires solid funding source availability • Unclear security of external funding sources to maintain integrity of the plan: secure state and federal funding unknown: does not support the claim of sustainability when the overhead cost structure is steep. • The information provided related to the sustainability of the plan lacks commitment from within its own internal budgetary formula. The applicant referenced external benefactors, including the Dupree Foundation, to support a technology program but does not reference the funding in its sustainability rationale. 		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

- Clear vision of strategies to improve student achievement through the implementation of personal learning environments based upon collaboration, data based strategies and twenty-first century technological tools
- Plan aligned with vision in preparing students for success in post secondary work and a global economy
- Well defined personalization of strategies through the use of data systems to monitor progress
- Professional development opportunities clearly defined and focused to increase teacher effectiveness
- Extensive focus on collaboration of all stakeholders in developing, implementing, and evaluating the plan
- Needs assessment data identifies strengths and weaknesses in each participating school and has planned clear implementation timelines related to LEA change and reform
- The applicant has developed a credible plan to increase student achievement through the personalization of learning supported through technology infusion. The applicant's mission to ensure that all students find success in their learning and personal development through a system characterized by extensive community and parental involvement, quality resources, exemplary staff, a safe and caring environment, and a challenging, personalized educational program encompassing advanced technology is clearly represented in the proposal. The applicant successfully supported its focus on infrastructure, instruction, assessment, and learning.
- The applicant coherently and comprehensively addresses its intention to build on core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching through personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college and career-ready standards and graduation requirements and accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting academic needs of each student, increase the effectiveness of educators, expand student access to the most effective educators, decrease achievement gaps across student groups, and increase the rate at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Total	210	182
-------	-----	-----



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0490GA-2 for Morgan County Charter School System

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has articulated a comprehensive and coherent reform vision by adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed:

- Since 1995 the stated mission of the Morgan County Charter School System has been “to ensure that all students will be successful in their learning and personal development through a system characterized by extensive community and parental involvement, quality resources, an exemplary staff, a safe and caring environment, and a challenging, personalized educational program encompassing

advanced technology."

The applicant plans on implementing data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals with data to improve instruction as evidenced by:

- Technology will be leveraged to organize CCSS and digital content through the use of a learning management system (LMS).
- While not necessarily a weakness, there is no evidence this LMS currently exists; rather the applicant plans on developing such a system.

While there are no plans presented to recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, which is one of the four assurance areas, this area is noted as being addressed in their Teacher Incentive Fund 4 Grant Application.

A weakness is that the applicant has not addressed the last assurance area of how they will turn around low-achieving schools since none of the LEAs in this consortium are historically low-achieving, although there are sub-groups that have achievement gaps.

The applicant articulates a relatively high quality approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)

10

9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not provided a description of the process for selecting schools to participate; rather the applicant notes that all schools in its district will participate and they meet the eligibility requirements. Additionally, all students in the district will participate. Overall the strength of the application lies in the fact that no one will be missed in the reform process.

It is unclear why only 190 of 254 educators are noted as participating in the table presented for this criterion.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

9

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided high-quality plans to include all schools and all students in its LEA; therefore, the plan already incorporates the provisions of this criterion and includes achievable goals, a timeline for implementation, expected outcomes, and designations of responsible parties.

Its logic model proposes that technology and related inputs invested in the activities focusing on professional development, effective assessment, research-based instruction, management of learning resources and equitable access personalized learning environments for all students. The model is fairly comprehensive and lists inputs, activities and participants, and short, medium, and long-term goals. The logic model could be strengthened if the short term goals were quantified. The participants include all stakeholders who are responsible for various activities from training, through the use of the LMS, to feedback and communication.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

9

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's current level of students meeting proficiency is over 90% on the Georgia Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT). Therefore, their goals are based on exceeding the State ESEA standards and not just meeting them and are likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity.

In decreasing achievement gaps, this applicant presents each subgroup's percentage of students exceeding the CRCT test standards as compared to the highest performing group, White students. Their incremental goals appear to be realistic in narrowing the current gaps.

The state data for graduation rates has not been disaggregated; therefore, this applicant has predicted subgroup performance based on last year's rates. Growth rates are based on half the graduation rates presented in the state's RTTT3 application for most subgroups, although it is unclear to which subgroups this actually applies. The graduate rates proposed appear to be a bit ambitious for some subgroups, but are overall achievable.

Subgroup data for college enrollment was not specified, but the overall rates appeared realistic and achievable.

No optional postsecondary information was provided.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	14

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states personalized student learning has been a major initiative for the Morgan County Charter School System since 1995. They demonstrate a clear record of success for more than the past four years as evidenced by:

- They report that the importance of personalization/individualization of student learning is evident because measurement of this data has appeared, and has been measured and updated on a scheduled, consistent basis, in the three Strategic Plans since the system's first 1995 plan.
- Five year trends on the state Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) show their student performance is increasing in the "Meets/Exceeds Expectation" categories, while the "Does Not Meet Expectation" group is declining.
- Test scores for the 2010-2011 school year show Morgan County students performed higher than the Georgia average in all grades measured for every one of the content areas measured.
- End of Course Test (EOCT) data for the "All Students" group for school years 2008-2009 through 2010-2011 show gains in all areas.
- Although performance on the enhanced Georgia High School Graduation Test for English/Language Arts showed increases in the "Meets/Exceeds Expectation," Mathematics scores decreased slightly which is a small weakness.
- Participants in the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs showed increases and the number of students taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses and tests has also increased.
- An analysis of the last four years of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) Math scores shows all subgroups meeting the minimum reporting requirements, all measured subgroups taking the Georgia High School Graduation Test in Math (enhanced) increased their scores over the last four reported years except for the White subgroup, the Georgia High School Graduation Test results for English Language Arts slightly declined for the White subgroup (by .5%) and by 7.6% for the Economically Disadvantaged subgroup, and SAT scores have increased.

While the applicant has demonstrated a strong past track record of success in improving student achievement, a concern is that the applicant has not provided evidence of increasing graduation rates or college enrollment rates over the past four years.

The applicant indicates that overall 90% of the students are proficient or above, so their reforms are sufficiently focused on the various sub-groups in an attempt to minimize the achievement gaps compared to White students. The applicant did not provide evidence of implementing ambitious reforms in low-performing schools because there are no real low-achieving schools overall, just some low-achieving sub-groups. Their reforms include:

- Afternoon tutorials (including transportation) two days a week taught by certified teachers at the child's home school for primary, elementary, and middle schools in the areas of Math and Reading/Language Arts.
- Special education students are provided Extended School Year Services based on IEP team decisions.
- High school students have an Enrichment period built into their weekly schedules so that they can receive extra support in any subject.
- Morning tutoring, "Lunch and Learn" sessions, remedial software programs, a dedicated Reading period taught every day by certified reading teachers at the middle school, and Reading and Math Workshops during middle school Connections periods also provide students opportunities to gain better understanding and meet standard on the Georgia Performance Standards.
- The Credit Recovery program at Morgan County High School allows students to focus on mastering unmet standards online from home, during Summer School, or during specially-designed schedules to meet graduation requirements.
- The Freshman Academy allows 9th grade students the nurturing they require as new high school students.

Student performance data is presented and shared effectively through a variety of sources:

- to members of the Board of Education and the community through monthly Board of Education meetings, School Governance Council meetings, Parent and Teacher Advisory Committee meetings, school-based faculty meetings, Principals' Council meetings, quarterly District "Town Hall" Meetings, and community meetings.
- with local media and placed on the schools' and system websites.
- disaggregated data is presented to teachers and schools.

analysis of individual student data also guides teachers in making decisions.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)

5

2

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Salary information is not provided in this application and the applicant presents no evidence of any actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff information being made available.

However, the applicant expresses some transparency in that each of the four schools in the Morgan County Charter School System are governed by school governance councils which are composed of teachers, parents, community members, and students, where appropriate. Each school governance council has the responsibility for and decision-making authority related to:

- A. Recommend personnel for submission to the Superintendent for hire;
- B. Determine use of funding (as per formula based on enrollment) in technology and instructional materials;
- C. Develop, approve, and monitor the continuous school improvement planning process (three year plan with annual reviews and updates that includes plans to foster student and teacher development);
- D. Review assessment data and use it for decision-making purposes;
- E. Assist with school accreditation and improvement reviews and assessments and,
- F. Recommend school needs to the Board during the annual budget process.

A weakness is that these councils have no demonstrated responsibility for or decision-making authority related to awarding salaries.

During the months of budget construction, the schools, with the assistance of their School Governance Councils, determine necessary staff member units, professional learning activities, technological needs, building repair issues, and instructional material requests. However, there is no oversight of salaries mentioned.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

10

9

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates evidence of meeting this criterion and states that under the terms of a charter between the State Board of Education and the local school district, the system receives flexibility from certain state rules and regulations in exchange for greater accountability. Despite the lack of clarity around specific rules or laws from which it has exemptions, it is evident that they would likely be able to carry out this project within the State's legal and regulatory framework.

There is an emphasis from the applicant on school-based leadership and decision-making. Using the granted flexibility, the school system has utilized flexibility of instructional scheduling to meet the differing needs of individual students. The school system has also utilized professional learning communities of educators to enhance professional learning and delivery of instruction to students. Curriculum and instruction have been more personalized through the use of small student learning communities.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement by noting:

- Before any work on the actual grant application was begun, the superintendent held several meetings with the principals of each school, System Senior Leadership staff, and Central Office directors.
- More stakeholders were brought in to the planning as the original ideas grew into a workable design.
- Members of the original planning team met with state-wide leaders and vendors in technology to explore the newest innovations, toured schools outside of their system to learn about, and see first-hand examples of higher level assessments, and began researching their school system data.
- The grant application process, purpose, and plan were shared with the members of the Board of Education, and then the media through two local weekly newspapers.
- The grant process and project were described to the School Governance Councils at each school by the principal.
- The superintendent entertained questions about the grant from members of his Teacher Advisory Council.
- Key local and state leaders were contacted and letters of support were garnered from stakeholders and local civic and fraternal groups.
- Input from all these activities were taken into consideration as the grant application process matured.

The applicant states later in this section that teachers were also engaged in the development and endorsement of the grant application. More than 70% of teachers support this grant application. The application would have been strengthened if teachers were engaged from the beginning of the entire process; this could have increased buy-in and support.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states they have demonstrated evidence of this criterion by:

- Using a process developed by the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) to develop an updated strategic improvement plan for the school system.
- This comprehensive process engaged over 200 community members and all stakeholder groups to create universal ownership and support for system and school improvement.
- In March, 2012 a group of 30 people representing stakeholder groups from the school board, central office, schools, parents, students, business and other community representatives were assembled to answer specific questions about their current identity and position and future goals.
- Notably absent from this list of groups are teachers, which is a significant weakness to this proposal.
- Strengths and weaknesses of the system were identified. Identified needs and gaps related to the implementation of personalized learning environments were included. Performance objectives, scheduled evaluative measures and ambitious, but realistic targets for the next five years were set based on data analysis from multiple sources, community and school input, and stakeholder emphasis.

The applicant focused on implementing its strategic plan and not on implementing a plan to assess its current status in implementing personalized learning environments via this grant application.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant makes a relatively strong case for their development of a comprehensive plan to implement a personalized learning platform for all students from Kindergarten through the twelfth grade with the support of the parents, educators, and students that will be implemented system-wide over the four years covered by the Race To The Top grant. This is evidenced by:

- They plan to place tablet devices in the hands of each student and teacher in combination with a robust learning management system (LMS).
- The LMSs under review are designed and customized based on student level data. However, the lack of a current LMS may inhibit efforts to implement the system upon receipt of the grant.
- Student courses have already been aligned to the Common Core State Standards and the Georgia Performance Standards.
- Parents will be given a login for a Parent Dashboard of the LMS enabling them to view their child's progress and comment on resources and task lists.
- Student and teacher dashboards will also be simple, visual means of measuring and charting individual progress.
- The student dashboard gives students the feeling of control over their education and motivates them through self-directed, personalized engagement.
- The assignments, activities, and resources will be based on student preferences, as gleaned from each student's Personal Learner Profile, and will be modified, as necessary, by the teacher.
- Each dashboard will be unique to the individual needs of the learner, with specialized software programs and distance learning "real world" field trips or global classrooms.
- A list of options for parents to use to support home-based interventions will also be provided on the dashboard.
- Their philosophy of three stages of personalized learning is built on the framework of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Progressing through the three stages using UDL can help learners understand how to structure and take responsibility for their learning to achieve their learning goals and measure their progress toward their personal goals.

The applicant does not specifically address having access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

The applicant also does not specifically address accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students. All other parts of a and b in this criterion were met in the applicant's response.

Mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning and will be implemented in stages over the four years of the grant.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
---	----	----

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a relatively strong high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment as noted by:

- The applicant's Personalized Learning Project includes a four-year plan that starts with pilot projects that involve teachers selected based on their enthusiasm, proven teaching practice, ability to lead others, and openness to change.
- Through the Professional Learning Plan, a sustainable support system that builds capacity for all teachers to implement personalized learning environments for all students will be created and fully operational by 2016.
- The applicant has set goals and objectives, as well as an achievable timeline to prepare teachers for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide students with the support they need to be college- and career-ready and to graduate.
- Personalized Learning (PL) Coaches exhibiting these previously noted characteristics who also use and integrate technology in their classrooms will be carefully recruited by the school system to work with the teachers as this project begins.
- By Year four of the project, all teachers and students in the system will be involved in the Personalized Learning Project.
- They will contract with an outside consulting firm (The Personalized Learning, or "PL Team") with expertise in personalizing learning, technology integration, and UDL to guide the assessment, planning, and implementation of this project.
- The PL Team will conduct a thorough assessment, in conjunction with the external evaluation team, of the current culture and learning environment of the four schools and the school community.
- Professional development will involve how to use these assessments as learning.
- A consideration of this project will be based on surveys and interviews from the learners to create a plan that will accelerate their learning by supporting the needs of diverse learners.
- The PL Team will introduce the Master Teacher and Lead Learner Programs to the leadership teams as a strategy to build capacity for Personalized Learning Environments in their schools and discuss how learners can drive their learning.

It is unclear how the applicant will increase the number of students who are taught by highly effective teachers.

A concern is that training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps for PK-3 are not shown to be developmentally appropriate.

Additionally, while feedback is often provided to teachers and administration, it has not been shown how administrative performance will be taken into consideration in this plan, which can directly affect instruction and attainment of goals.

Overall, all parts of a, b, and c of the criterion were met other than those noted.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant details a strong high-quality plan with to support project implementation as evidenced by:

- In the central office, the Senior Leadership Team (comprised of the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent for

Teaching and Learning and the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support and Community Relations) meets every week on a dedicated, scheduled basis to discuss and resolve current issues which demonstrates support and services to all participating schools.

- Five Program Directors (Transportation/Operations/Facilities, Technology, Finance, School Nutrition, and Human Resources) meet regularly with school principals, teachers, and support staff to provide the services needed to enhance student achievement. This is further evidence of central office support.
- The Principals' Council also meets on Wednesday with the Superintendent and the Senior Leadership Team to discuss current issues and concerns.
- The school leadership teams at each school have been designed at the school level by the faculty and staff in order to meet the specific, unique needs of that school.
- Each of the schools operates with a School Governance Council, which has the purpose and intent to maximize school level decision- making.
- Students at the high school are allowed to earn class credit (Carnegie Units) for classes based on mastery of standards instead of on a designated amount of seat time, which has been waived.
- Students involved in the credit recovery process are allowed to take end-of-course/end-of-year assessments in order to demonstrate mastery of the Georgia Performance Standards when they feel they are ready.
- Students are allowed to be exposed to learning styles from different teachers and at different times during the school day as they work as teams to master standards.
- Technology has played a major role in mastering unmet standards through the use of individualized, fully investigated, student-centered, research-based software programs designed to teach and re-teach specific standards.
- All subgroup populations have equal access to all of the programs designed to help students attain mastery of standards.

The applicant's plan is specific and has demonstrated a clear set of goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties over the course of the grant.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has high-quality plans in place to support the infrastructure for personalizing learning as described in this application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their design ensures that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders who play a part in individualizing learning, regardless of income, have access to all the tools and resources required anytime.• They plan to provide Internet-ready laptops or iPads for every student and Internet-ready devices will extend the school and learning into the homes of all students. <p>The applicant provides evidence that all stakeholders will have appropriate levels of technical support by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring that the continuous learners have access to technical support by implementing a well-thought out, scheduled timetable for professional development.• Technology staff will be available for support during the school day; an evening "Helpline," manned by local technology staff, will allow users experiencing difficulty or having questions about the technology aspect to call in with their questions.• It is unclear if parents, students, and other staff will have access to this helpline. <p>The applicant specifies that a new LMS will allow parents access to personalized information specific to their child even as they learn to access information technology and then to export it into an open data format so that it can be used with the learning management system to provide individualized learning resources for their children.</p> <p>The applicant notes the system also uses inter-operable data systems so that data can flow through the Student Information System and the Learning Management System.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score

(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a clear, high-quality approach to continuously improving its plan as shown by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have an appropriate plan to formalize a basic continuous improvement cycle since it has already received AdvancEd accreditation for successful implementation. • They present the results of the AdvancEd review and the System Balanced Scorecard on the system website and through the local media which will help develop system initiatives and measures to monitor the system. • Their work on personalized learning environments will be integrated into the System Balanced Scorecard which allows for periodic review and monitoring by the community. • They have partnered with an external evaluation team which will aid in objectively evaluating progress towards implementing a personalized system of learning for all students. • Both internal and external evaluations will be structured around the goals in their program's logic model which will help their continuous improvement process and assess progress towards their goals,. • They plan to collect multiple sources of information from relevant stakeholders which will provide them with the feedback for making decisions about modifications needed for on-going activities. <p>The applicant provides a realistic and achievable timeline for conducting the evaluation activities and this continuous improvement plan is likely to be effective.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes sound strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with stakeholders as demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The superintendent will share evaluation results and feedback through the System Teachers' Advisory Council, Principals' Council, Board of Education, and the System Charter Leadership Team who, in turn, will share their information with appropriate people in their groups. This will help the applicant make necessary adjustments and revisions during implementation. • The Senior Leadership Staff meets weekly with two local weekly newspaper reporters and will share current evaluation results with them. This helps inform and engage external stakeholders. • The superintendent holds quarterly Town Hall Meetings, accompanied by the Board of Education member from that district and the outcomes of this grant and student achievement, will be reviewed with community members attending these meetings. This team approach is an appropriate strategy to keep the lines of communication open. • Feedback from the business community will be garnered through discussions with their Partners in Education group and various civic/fraternal organizations. This serves to provide the opportunity for open dialog with those who have endorsed this application. • Evaluations will be posted on the system website, along with opportunities for feedback on their social networking sites. This speaks to the applicant's desire to foster a united approach for student learning and success. <p>Overall the applicant's approach to ongoing engagement is likely to be successful.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has formulated ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures.</p> <p>The rationale for selecting many of the performance measures is that they will become part of the Georgia Department of Education's College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) in lieu of AYP.</p> <p>The applicant will utilize the state-wide evaluation system currently being piloted by the Georgia Department of Education: TKES (Teacher Keys Effectiveness System) and LKES (Leader Keys Effectiveness System).</p> <p>The applicant will work with the Georgia Department of Education in making changes and revisions as necessary to accurately reflect the performance of school personnel in relation to student growth and performance.</p> <p>The applicant's efforts to utilize the Georgia Department of Education's initiatives in implementing this grant should foster continuous improvement of its plan.</p>		

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided an appropriate evaluation system in previous criteria that is well supported throughout this application and which will provide ongoing formative feedback about the effectiveness of the input investments. This evaluation includes performance measures by grade and by sub-groups that will be monitored, evaluated, and adjusted as necessary. This is a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve their plan.</p> <p>Their measures of effectiveness will include views from parents and community stakeholders, in addition to students and teachers. They will collect both quantitative and qualitative measures of stakeholders' experiences and perceptions to try to provide multiple ways to evaluate expenses and efforts. These perceptions will be evaluated in coordination with academic and non-cognitive performance measures. This comprehensive, integrated evaluation system involves a wide range of stakeholders and will assess multiple indicators of effectiveness of RTT-District funded activities.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Despite the encouragement of the state department of education, the narratives for this section are imbedded within the tables. The information provided is insufficient to determine whether the costs are reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal. The applicant presents breakout information for each of its seven projects; however, the manner in which the costs for personnel, travel, equipment, and contractual expenses were determined is unclear. As an example, they note in Table 4-1 for their Professional Learning Project that costs for Personalized Learning Coaches is based on medium salary; it is unclear why they chose median values rather than mean values for costs for the PLCs.</p> <p>The applicant developed this budget to accommodate the needs of seven identified projects. Two projects are directly related exclusively to the management of the grant and the other five projects were developed to support the implementation of their personalized learning vision with the goal of moving instruction from the traditional to personalized learning. This strategy appears to be sufficient, although it lacks some specifics, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.</p> <p>The applicant provides a reasonable rationale for investments and priorities, a description of all of the funds that will be used to support the implementation of the proposal, and identification of the funds that will be used for one-time investments in the tables.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant lacks some aspects of a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grant proposal has been structured with the intent of sustaining the effort in the post-grant period; however, there is no commitment of any operating funds from the system itself. • A strength is that at the end of the grant cycle they will have a cadre of Master Teachers who can provide support to all continuing staff who were trained during the four year period, and any new staff. • The System is committed to use the resources generated from other Federal fund sources, state funding, local tax revenues, and Educational Special Local Option Sales Tax (ESLOST). • Community support of the school system is also clear – as evidenced by the passage of the Education Local Option Sales Tax (ELOST) every year it has come up for a vote. However, the ELOST may be vulnerable since it is subject to vote by the local population. <p>Sources of funding to sustain this grant are noted in the Sustainability Plan to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Professional Development Funds, Title 1, Title VI-B, and Local Revenue for Project 1 • Local tax revenue and ELOST for Project 2 • Better utilization of Federal E-rate for Project 3, although this implies the E-rate has not been properly utilized to date. • Local tax revenue and ELOST for Project 4 		

- Title 1, Title VI-B, local tax revenue, ELOST for Project 5

It is uncertain, given the current economic situation, whether local, state, and federal funds will continue to be available four years out to sustain the plan. However, under the current climate, it is reasonable that the applicant's plan can be sustained beyond the grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not propose to integrate public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements; accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers as evidenced by:

- A clear and organized reform vision that is aligned with both its RTTT Scope of Work and the state's work around the four reform areas.
- Their concept of personalized learning driven by technology for all students is ambitious, but achievable.
- The applicant's plan to begin with PL coaches in pilot programs the first year and segue into the involvement of more educators and students as the program progresses is noteworthy.
- Closing the achievement gaps, increasing graduation percentages, and fostering college and career ready requirements is commendable.

Total	210	175
-------	-----	-----



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0490GA-3 for Morgan County Charter School System

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has clearly articulated an appropriate reform vision that compliments the four core educational assurance areas. The applicant also describes a clear and succinct plan for accelerating student achievement and presents an approach that is student-focused and one that is inclusive of all student groups. The plan includes evidence for expanding the applicant's mission of a personalized educational program driven by advanced technology. The applicant further provides appropriate approaches for addressing the reform vision that include reinforcing the school's technology infrastructure to provide all students and teachers access to technology 24/7; designing standard-based concepts aligned to individual student needs such that students and educators should have options that will engage them in learning such as large groups, small groups, and work tailored to the individual goals, needs, interests, and prior experience of each learner. Another positive characteristic of the reform vision is creating an effective assessment system to help educators measure student learning through time, to help determine their strengths and weaknesses, and supportive technology assessment tools. The applicant also plans on implementing appropriate professional development strategies to help build the capacity of all educators with respect to assessment and learning design. While maintaining that the plan will address a personalized learning plan based on individual needs, the applicant does not sufficiently address how educators and principals will be informed about how they can improve instruction. Furthermore, there was no mention for how effective teachers and principals will be recruited or retained especially where they are needed the most.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided sufficient narrative supported by appropriate data that clearly outlines its support of a high-quality proposal. The applicant indicates that the project will include all students, Pre K-12, the schools that will participate, and the total number of participating students. The applicant also describes number and percent of students within individual groups (low-income, ethnic and racial minorities, etc.), and the number of educators and other personnel. As a small school system, the Morgan County Charter School System decided to include all of its schools (4) for participation in the project. These include a primary school, an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school. It employs 254 full and part-time teachers and enrolls a total of 3,316 students from PreK-12. White students make up 64.1% of the student population with Black students being the next largest group at 27.9%. The Latino population is said to be steadily growing at 4.2%. Students identifying themselves as multi-racial comprise 2.6% and 1.2% are of Asian descent. The applicant identified several groups of students as at-risk with 1,557 students considered high-need and low-income students.</p> <p>A strength of the project is that all schools in this charter system are participating.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a logic model demonstrating short, medium and long range outcomes that also outlines appropriate inputs and outputs. The logic model also identifies activities and target groups that will help reach its outcome goals. While the logic model presented describes the project's expectations (short, medium, and long range outcomes), it fails to provide how the project will lead to student learning outcomes for all students. The proposed plan articulates the applicant's expectations about how and why the proposed interventions will help bring about the outcomes. Assumptions have been identified that precisely articulate the key ingredients of the success and would let the applicant know whether goals have been met, both short and long term. As such, the applicant has provided assumptions to help picture where they want to be, what they want to accomplish as a school system in four years, how they are going to get there through emerging personalized learning plan design, and how they will know when arrived. The applicant proposes to address these assumptions through their assessment of student progress and the evaluation of the project.</p> <p>Based on the proposed assumptions (where they are and where they want to be, what want to accomplish) and the identified outcomes (how they will know when they have arrived), the applicant demonstrates how the project will be scaled up and how the outcomes translate into district and school-wide changes. Further, the logic model has identified appropriate inputs, activities and outputs that clearly support meaningful reform.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Based on the proposed vision it is likely that student learning and performance will be improved. The applicant provides goals, overall and by subgroups, for each of the areas noted in this criterion, including college enrollment rates. Participating</p>		

students are currently at or above proficiency; thus the proposed targets will be achieved. While the targets identified by the applicant are likely to be achieved, it is not possible to determine whether they are ambitious because the applicant does not provide comparison group scores that show how these proposed targets are equal to or exceed State targets. Furthermore, the applicant did not clearly describe how it determined its goals for the various subgroups.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence that clearly demonstrates a record of success for advancing student learning and increasing equity in learning and teaching. Data has been provided that demonstrates student academic growth based on five-year trends showing students increasing on the "meets or exceeds expectation" category while declining in the "does not meet expectations" category. Evidence was also provided that shows Morgan County students performing higher than the Georgia average in all grades measured as well as gains in each of the End of Course exams. The applicant also provides other evidence, SAT scores, end-of-course exam scores, and AP scores, to document a record of success. There was also evidence provided demonstrating a past track record of success for decreasing achievement gaps, which included the scores on standardized tests for all subgroups. However, high school graduation data for years 2009 and 2012 indicate a slight drop in graduation rates from 87.3% to 86.4% and no college enrollment rates were provided; the applicant only provides estimates based on counselor information.</p> <p>The applicant includes information for how it makes available and accessible this information throughout the district and its community. This includes providing information to members of the Board of Education and the community through monthly Board of Education meetings, School Governance Council meetings, Parent and Teacher Advisory Committee meetings, school-based faculty meetings, Principals' Council meetings, quarterly District "Town Hall" Meetings, and community meetings. While awareness and access has been provided to all stakeholders, perhaps a more important aspect of the data sharing is the participatory commitment to give each group an opportunity to comment and to take part in strategic decision-making. For example, educators make class-room based decisions about student placement and curriculum alignment. Students use their own data to set yearly goals for improving their performance. The community together with the school system designed a school calendar that included a five-day inter-session so student could receive remediation on unmet standards.</p> <p>There was no reference to any reform efforts targeting low-performing schools and there does not appear that any of the schools participating in the project would be considered a low-performing school or one that has been designated as a persistently lowest-achieving school.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The nature of the charter system status granted to the applicant by the Georgia Department of Education provides a number of assurances that guarantee a high level of transparency in each of its processes, procedures, fiscal management, etc. While complying with the Open and Public Meetings Act for conducting meetings with the principles of transparency and avoidance, the applicant does not provide clear evidence or description of the extent to which the applicant makes available information regarding the four categories of expenditures. Thus, applicant did not provide salary information and no evidence was provided of any personnel salaries at the school level for instructional and support staff and did not include information regarding the non-personnel expenditures.</p> <p>The applicant does provide evidence to demonstrate an appropriate governance structure with representation from all stakeholders. These transparent assurances are noted throughout the district and within each of the schools operating within the district. The governance structure includes teachers, parents, community members and students with decision-making responsibility and budget oversight.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant, as an authorized charter system by the State, provides sufficient narrative to demonstrate an autonomous, free-standing entity and is accountable to the laws applicable to it by the State as a charter school. As such, the applicant provides the governance structure for each school and for the district and provides evidence of autonomy for how it operates based on its charter system contract. These include having a school governance council at each school and a system charter leadership team that coordinates the work of each school's governance councils. The applicant provides appropriate evidence to indicate school-based leadership and decision-making. For example, each school is provided flexibility in the instructional scheduling that allows each school to institute its personalized learning reform to fit within their school structure. The system also</p>		

provides sufficient autonomy to each school for setting professional learning communities of educators as determined by their own educators' needs and the delivery of instruction. In addition, each school's governance council has been given sufficient autonomy for making site-based decision-making authority on a number of locally related areas such as endorsing and monitoring the school improvement plans and approving the school curriculum, two areas that are directly related to the proposed personalized learning reform efforts.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Throughout the development of the plan, from initial discussions about what works best for the district to designing and modifying the plan based on discussions, the applicant involved System Senior Leadership staff and Central Office directors. Thereafter, the applicant provided the proposed plan to state-wide leaders, media, parents, educators, students and the Board of Education for their review and approval. Evidence that 70% of teachers from participating schools supported the proposal was included as appendix C. Also included are letters of support and endorsement of the proposal from parents and community organizations in appendix D, F, and G. Even though the applicant received support from 70% of the educators, it appears that the applicant did not involve the educators in the initial design discussions or revisions. It appears that the educators were only brought in at the end and asked to approve the plan rather than to help design the plan.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outlines a focused process providing evidence for how it came about designing a high-quality plan that it believes supports ongoing analysis for where they are, where they need to go and what is needed to get them there. The plan mentions the steps taken with accompanying rationale, parties involved, and the timeline taken for the analysis of the gaps and needs. Using a SWOT analysis process, strategic planning process identified needs within each area (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat). While providing evidence for performing an analysis of its strategic plan, there was no evidence provided for how the applicant conducted an analysis of the current status in implementing personalized learning environments.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	13

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposed plan is indeed one that personalizes the learning environment and provides a research-based instructional program for all students, PreK-12. As stated in the applicant's vision plan, the design will be a personalized educational program encompassing advanced technology. Teachers and students will be provided teaching and learning options that fit individual learning styles such as large groups, small groups, and work tailored to the individual goals, needs, interests, and prior experience of each learner. The proposed plan is built around a four-year plan that starts with pilot projects that involve teachers selected based on their enthusiasm, proven teaching practice, ability to lead others, and openness to change. Students will be given ongoing and regular feedback through the proposed Learning Management System that will assist with incorporating choice of assignments, activities, and resources, based on the personalized profile of each student as generated by a carefully chosen standards-based, norm-referenced assessment incorporated within the learning management system. This same system will be used to provide students with a list of completed college and career-ready standards as well as standards needed to be completed; thus, providing the student a picture for what is needed for mastery of college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements. The proposed plan is clear about the importance for parents, educators and students of understanding how the proposed strategy is key to the success of the project. The applicant also provides support for how all this impacts the college and career-readiness for students. A four-year timeline was provided that describes the training expectations and activities to be carried out.

While providing a detailed description of the mechanisms to provide appropriate training for the educators for implementing the new strategies, this same was not the case of students and parents. The applicant mentions that the proposed system should focus on teaching and learning instead of on the mechanics of the system and how the system works; however, the plan mostly focused on the mechanics of the system and what it expects students to gain from the new approach. Further, little mention was given to how parents would also be provided training and support in order for them to understand how to use the tools and resources.

The applicant did not address a plan regarding accommodations or strategies for high-need students that would help them

stay on track for meeting college and career-ready standards.

Overall, the proposed plan would not be considered a high-quality plan as it did not address all the points within the criterion, and for this reason, the score provided reflects this weakness.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

To address the criterion, the applicant has provided strong evidence for designing a comprehensive plan for improving learning and teaching. Examples of these strategies include personalized learning, pedagogy, Universal Design for Learning, and technology integration. The applicant plans to execute the plan by initiating an assessment that includes the following: pre-assessment surveys for each school, reviewing existing plans and student data, surveys of administrators, teachers, learners, and community members, consultations with leadership teams, classroom observations of teachers, interviews of teachers, school administrators, technology leads, literacy coaches, curriculum specialists, and other staff. Beginning with a pre-assessment process demonstrates a sound approach and provides guarantees for creating awareness and buy-in from all its constituents. These assessments will be ongoing and will also be used as learning tools. Additionally, school leaders have committed to changing the school culture over the next four years and have proposed to communicate realistic expectations such that the proposed transformation in school culture would encourage shared authority and responsibility. Each step of the proposed plan has been clearly defined and staged with achievable timelines and strategies. Examples of the teaching and learning strategies include developing professional learning communities, on-line networking and conversations, establishing a community of practice to help build a positive school culture. The proposed teaching and leading strategies are also shown to support and aligned with the applicant's approach to learning; thus engaging and empowering both the learner and the teacher as co-designers of learning.

The applicant has not addressed how school leaders and leadership teams would be involved or how their effectiveness will be measured via frequent feedback. The applicant also did not address a plan for increasing the number of students who would be given instruction by highly effective teachers and leaders.

Overall, the proposed plan would not be considered to be a high-quality plan as it did not clearly address each of points in the criterion, and for this reason, a perfect score was not provided.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has described an organizational structure that appears to be open and focused as "One Morgan", thus seemingly providing assurances that the central office will support and provide services to all schools. Further evidence of this is supported via the organization's commitment to a shared governance focused on student learning, open avenues of communication and one that allows for school-level decision making and autonomy. "Seat time" has been waived and replaced by mastery of content thus increasing learning opportunities for students such as enrichment and advisory courses or credit recovery time.

Furthermore, the applicant's plan is specific with regards to giving students opportunities to progress and earn credit and to demonstrate mastery of standards. These include providing all sub-groups equal access to all of the programs designed to help students master standards, providing appropriate technology such as research-based software programs designed to teach and re-teach specific learning strategies, and having teachers teach to the different learning styles as opposed to one size fitting all.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a strong plan for ensuring that all its stakeholders have access to necessary tools and resources with assurances for making its high-quality plan work such that all aspects of the proposed project will in place in time. These include a professional learning environment devoted entirely to the learning management system and appropriate resources that include extensive technical support. The applicant also provides evidence for these being key elements such that the project will work because of the commitments to provide staff, parents, and students with the knowledge as well as hands-on, working understanding of the proposed system. The applicant also provides assurances that the proposed system also uses interoperable data systems so that data can flow through the Student Information System and the Learning Management System. The applicant also provides clear evidence that the proposed infrastructure will be supported through activities, resources, and training timeline such as local technology support and having staff on call.

The plan also includes assurances for providing data systems that are easily and readily available to all. The applicant identifies a number of these systems currently available to all such as the Parent Portal, the Student Information System, and the Learning Management System.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a high-quality plan and approach for addressing a continuous improvement process. The applicant has outlined a comprehensive evaluation strategy that will provide timely and ongoing feedback on progress made towards meeting the goals of the proposed project. The proposed evaluation plan includes: surveys and focus groups with teachers, students, parents, and community representatives; collection and analysis of data, and a timeline that addresses when monitoring is to be conducted, what measures will be gathered and when information will be shared and with whom. Throughout the evaluation plan, the applicant has provided opportunities via focus groups and the data analysis for the applicant to address the continuous improvement efforts and has included steps for providing corrective actions should there be any unanticipated set-backs or opportunities.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a high-quality approach and provides a sound description of the strategies to be implemented. By providing a commitment to sharing and disclosing all aspects of the project, the applicant has provided sufficient detail throughout the application to demonstrate an effective approach and sound strategies. These include conducting initial discussions to obtain design feedback for all stakeholders to providing ongoing progress reports to local media outlets. Another avenue provided for keeping communications open and for offering opportunities for two-way communication, is having each of the standing councils include a project agenda item in each of their scheduled meetings.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided achievable and ambitious performance measures for all students as well as for each sub-group based on the annual targets for each of the required performance measures. The applicant also includes a rationale for each and a plan for how the results and data will be used to guide the implementation for taking corrective action. The applicant indicates that its rationale is based on the fact that it will become part of the state's college and career-readiness performance index in lieu of the AYP and that it will continuously monitor growth. Measures were provided for each sub-group and included for each grade level a college and career-readiness and health (fitness) measure.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Throughout the proposed plan, the applicant provides indicators reflective of an open and fluid project with an administration that is committed to the success of the project. Thus, the applicant has provided an appropriate evaluation plan that will provide ongoing formative feedback on the effectiveness of the project's investments. The proposed evaluation inclusive of its continuous improvement plan will employ both qualitative and quantitative measures, informal and formal feedback, and fiscally sound processes. The proposed plan also includes performance measures by grade and subgroups that will be monitored and evaluated and strategies for improved use of technology among end users. It also provides assurances for keeping all stakeholders involved throughout the project period as well as for providing commitments, top/down, for changing the school culture to one that is student-focused and for having incorporated a personalized student learning system at the end of project period.</p> <p>This is a high-quality approach to continuously improve the proposed plan.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score

(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposed budget includes an appropriate rationale for the requested funds that address the proposed priorities and investments. The proposed budget is both cost effective and adequate to support the project. The budget narrative coupled with the line item breakdowns are considered to be reasonable and sufficient. These examples include appropriate personnel, travel, and operational expenses. The applicant has identified a number of external funding resources that demonstrates a sound and thorough approach to not only a maintenance of effort but one that ensures long-term sustainability of the project.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided an appropriate plan for the project's sustainability beyond the grant period. It has identified a number of funding resources for each of the areas (fees, professional development, maintenance of equipment, etc) needing continuation funding. The plan also includes a three-year budget beyond the project period with appropriate detail and funding sources. The applicant's plan, however, is not considered to be a high-quality plan as it did not provide a clear evidence of support from within the organization.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant did not respond to this criterion.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has designed a comprehensive and coherent plan targeting the core educational areas and has succinctly outlined strategies, initiatives, and protocols that will lead to a personalized learning environment for its students. The plan identifies the needs and assets of each school and the district, has planned a comprehensive professional development agenda, has identified tools with appropriate technology support that includes an integrated management system, and has aligned its plan with the state's college and career-readiness standards. The proposed plan, as outlined throughout the application, will accelerate student achievement and will provide opportunities for increased learning by students. The proposed professional development strategies will help increase teacher and principal effectiveness, thus increasing the students' access to effective educators and school leaders. The proposed strategies that are tied to the state's college and career-readiness standards will help increase the rates at which students graduate from high school and be college or career-ready. The applicant has also outlined learning strategies that support closing the achievement gap across student groups.</p>		

Total	210	172
-------	-----	-----